

Indonesia Wants To Ensure No Haze Recurring This Year

Bernama

Jan 18, 2016

JAKARTA, Jan 18 (Bernama) -- Indonesian president Joko Widodo today wants all the authorities to carry out works in curbing forest and plantation fires in the country starting from now.

He said the government did not want last year's episode of forest and plantation fires that caused the haze to be repeated and the authorities in the districts were directed to act fast and appropriately in dealing with the problem.

The president, who is better known as Jokowi, said the authorities should be ready to face the forest fires much earlier and make prevention activities as a priority of their job.

"In 2016, we should really learn from 2015. We must address it this year better, be more alert and more towards prevention. Don't let the fire grow. There is no other choice," he told reporters here as quoted by the local online media.

He said the country must also conserve the ecosystems that had been damaged by fires and preservation works must start now following the setting up of the Peatland Restoration Body as the fires caught global attention.

Jokowi said he had to frequently explain to all heads of state he met relating to the issue of forest and plantation fires in Indonesia caused by the burning of underground peatland that was difficult to put out.

He also urged all the authorities, including the Indonesian National Military, police and local government to go to the ground to monitor the situation.

Jokowi stressed that legal action would also be taken against those involved in the forest and plantation burning activities.

Indonesia faced a serious catastrophe due to the forest and peatland fires which lasted for four months since July last year with some areas recording Air Pollutant Index (API) that breached 2,000.

Neighbouring countries including Malaysia was also affected by haze with hazardous API reading recorded.

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